

TOTAH

LUN*NA MENOH

*Who is Lun*na Menoh?*

Opening May 17th, 2023

TOTAH presents *Who is Lun*na Menoh?*, an exhibition of paintings, a runway show performance, and documentary film on the multidisciplinary artist. *Who is Lun*na Menoh?* opens May 17th, 2023. The film examines the finer details of Lun*na Menoh's biography and creative practice, and will screen on Saturday May 20th. This is Menoh's first solo exhibition with the gallery, and TOTAH is pleased to announce her inclusion in the program of represented artists.

Who is Lun*na Menoh? Originally from Japan, for many years Menoh has made Los Angeles her home. With a multidisciplinary repertoire that spans fashion, music, painting, performance art, and filmmaking, Lun*na Menoh is at once person and persona, a living cross section of the art and artifice her adopted city has come to offer: documentarian fanfic with a quintessentially Futurist spin.

While Menoh's earliest work in design quite literally refashioned the detritus of American life—repurposing discarded television sets or couches as wearable items of clothes—Menoh's visual art, particularly her "dirty collar" series, rests more vulnerably on a consciousness of antagonisms, of polarities that don't necessarily converge so much as they bring out what is most singular at each extreme.

While nodding to the fashion industry as well as pop culture celebrity, the paintings included in *Who is Lun*na Menoh?* are actually portraits. But while traditional portraits focus on the class, family, and religious affiliations of a sitter, Menoh's portraits highlight the vestigial traces of dirt which her absent sitters have left around their collar area. Figures like Prince, or Gustave Courbet, although their bodies are absent in the works alluding to them, still inhabit Menoh's paintings on a level that is more than ghostlike. Her portrait of Duchamp, for example, makes no direct reference to the artist, but more fundamentally alludes to his posture, his physique, his habits of dress.

Menoh asks viewers to consider if unseemly traces of dirt and labor, traces which stain the brands she renders so carefully, have more claim to authentically represent her absent sitters than conventional portraiture would allow for. By eliminating one polarity of the portrait tradition—reference to a person's face—she brings to light another, less sought-after reality which portraits uniquely capture. Namely, that the individuals who sat for their portraits were once living, breathing persons; flesh and blood brings, who, even after death, have stained the world with vestigial traces of their work and labor.

*Lun*na Menoh is a Japanese-born Renaissance artist who lives in Los Angeles. Her work deals with garments that expose the invisible thread between performance and fabric by making sculpturesque dresses, paintings, sculptures, and a series of runway shows with her conceptual but wearable outfits. Starting in 1999, she made a series of paintings of men's white shirts that are given a dirty, stained ring around the collar. In early 2005, she started making music, and currently performs as Les Sewing Sisters. In 2019 Les Sewing Sisters held a musical tour through 22 closets of private homes in Los Angeles. Their pop songs are about dresses and dressmaking but are approached with experimental touches, such as using the sewing machine as a musical instrument, and their debut album was released in 2021 with Lun*na Menoh's performance of Maurice Ravel's "Bolero" using Sewing machine noise. Her work has been exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, and the Hayward Gallery, London. Since the early 1990s she has presented work at Los Angeles art spaces and venues including Sue Spaid Fine Art, Beyond Baroque, Track 16 Gallery, Velaslavasay Panorama, and South Coast Plaza. Her work is held in the permanent collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.*

For further information please contact info@davidtotah.com